

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center

2101 NASA Road 1
Houston, Texas 77058-3696



July 6, 2006

Reply to Attn of:

AL-06-086

TO: Distribution

FROM: AL/Chief Counsel

SUBJECT: Widely Attended Gathering Determination Regarding Attendance of NASA
Civil Servant Invitees at the Inaugural Awarding of the Heinlein Prize

On July 7, 2006, the Trustees of the Robert A. and Virginia Heinlein Prize for Accomplishments in Commercial Space Activities will be hosting the inaugural award of the Heinlein Prize. The event will be held in Houston, Texas, at the St. Regis Hotel. The event is to begin at 6:30 p.m. and will honor Dr. Peter H. Diamandis, the inaugural awardee of the Heinlein Prize. Cocktails and dinner will be served to all attendees.

The Heinlein Prize is awarded for accomplishments in commercial space activities and Dr. Diamandis is being honored for his 25 years of pioneering work in space commercialization. This event will allow NASA employees the opportunity to disseminate information about the current return to flight mission as well as to discuss the overall Agency mission and vision for space exploration with people from the aerospace and other industries. The event will be a widely attended event of approximately 111 people from the Houston area, across the country, and the world. I find this event meets the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 C.F.R. §2635.204(g). Consequently, I conclude that NASA's interest in its employees attending this event outweighs any concern that free attendance may, or may appear to, improperly influence any NASA personnel in the performance of their official duties.

NASA employees whose duties may substantially affect the Robert A. and Virginia Heinlein Trust are not covered by this determination and should seek an individualized ethics determination from the Office of Chief Counsel regarding participation in this event pursuant to 5 C.F.R. §2635.204(g)(3)(i).

NASA civil service employees who have received an invitation for two complimentary event tickets, and are permitted to accept these tickets under the criteria above, may attend and accept the free tickets to attend the event.


Bernard J. Roan

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